



## **AARP Missouri: Stimulus Is First Step Toward Restoring Long-Term Financial Security For Older Americans**

*AARP Tracks “Key Vote” on Government Watch For 40 Million Members*

**KANSAS CITY, MO** – In a historic and critical vote, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Designated as a “key vote” by AARP on behalf of its 40 million members, the elected officials’ votes will be posted on AARP’s Government Watch site ([www.aarp.org/governmentwatch](http://www.aarp.org/governmentwatch)) so that individuals across the nation can see how their elected official voted on this legislation.

Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill (D) voted for the Stimulus, and Sen. Kit Bond (R) voted in opposition and along party lines.

Missouri House of Representatives legislators who voted for the Stimulus were: William Lacy Clay (D-1), Russ Carnahan (D-3), Ike Skelton (D-4), and Emanuel Cleaver (D-5). Those who voted against the bill, also along party lines: were W. Todd Aiken (R-2), Sam Graves (R-6), Roy Blunt (R-7) Jo Ann Emerson (R-7) and Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-9).

Norma Collins, Associate State Director –Advocacy for AARP Missouri, released the following statement today:

“Unprecedented job loss, loss of savings and investments, and rising numbers of uninsured individuals has forced every American to take notice of this dire moment in history. The passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is a critical moment for Americans young and old and a vital jump start to our ailing economy.

“AARP is pleased to see that Congress included a \$250 economic recovery payment for older Americans, veterans and people with disabilities who are not eligible for the Make Work Pay credit.

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**AARP-Stimulus – add 1**

“Additionally, we are encouraged by the long-term investment made by Congress that brings us steps closer to health care reform. Funding for health information technology, comparative effectiveness research and nurse and primary care training are all essential building blocks for reform and AARP is encouraged by their inclusion in the stimulus bill.

“While this landmark legislation is crucial to addressing our nation’s most pressing issues today, many critical issues remain, including bolstering and securing the housing market, protecting homeowners from foreclosure and jumpstarting the credit markets. As an organization that regularly works with both sides of the aisle, we are hopeful for bipartisan solutions to these issues as Congress and the new administration move forward.

In a recent letter from AARP CEO Bill Novelli to House and Senate leadership outlines the most important issues for older Americans in this legislation:

The bill contains many provisions that we believe are paramount to promoting economic growth, assisting those most affected by the economic crisis, and providing the foundation for meeting critical needs, such as health care and the development of livable communities. Among the provisions we agree are especially needed are:

- A \$250 economic recovery payment for older persons, veterans, and individuals with disabilities who are ineligible to receive a Make Work Pay credit.
- A significant increase in Medicaid spending that will help to stimulate the economy as the current economic downturn causes caseloads to rise while revenues plummet.
- Essential building blocks for health care reform, including support for health information technology that includes critical privacy protections, health care comparative effectiveness research, and nurse and primary care training. These changes are critical because we cannot fix our economy if we do not address our broken health care system.
- An increase in funding for the Social Security Administration at a time of significant caseload increases.
- Affordable health insurance via subsidized COBRA for those who have lost health coverage along with jobs.
- An extension and increase in unemployment benefits. Over the past twelve months the number of unemployed aged 55 and older has risen by 65 percent.
- An increase in Food Stamps and other nutrition support. Fixed and low-income individuals face unacceptable choices as food costs increase along with the price of medicine and health care.

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**AARP-Stimulus – add 2**

- An increase in the Weatherization Assistance Program to help low-income and older couples reduce their energy costs.
- A substantial increase in funding for transportation infrastructure projects that expand mobility options, including mass transit, rural and para-transit programs, and improved coordination of human services transportation programs.
- An increase in the loan value limit for FHA-insured reverse equity mortgages that would allow greater numbers of older homeowners to safely tap the equity in their homes to refinance unaffordable mortgages, obtain more suitable housing, pay medical bills or just meet daily living costs.

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